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Douglas M. Newman  
676 Nut Plains Road  
Guilford, CT 06437  
Cell: (203) 458-8383

March 9, 2009

Dear Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann, and Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Douglas Newman. I am here to strongly support Senate Bill 1015 (formerly SB259) allowing for Connecticut towns to determine their own election protocol for Board of Education candidates.

I'm reside in Guilford and I'm a life long Connecticut resident. My K-12 education was provided to me by the Norwalk Public Schools. I have a degree in economics. I am a small business owner and employ approximate 100 employees. I have served as Vice President of the Darien Chamber of Commerce, as member of the Trumbull Land Acquisition Committee and as a Board of Education appointee to Guilford's School Facility Task Force. I'm a past president of the Guilford PTA, a district-wide PTA council, and I'm a board member of the CT PTA and serve as member of its Legislative Committee and as a Region Director. Tomorrow I will be in Washington D.C. as an invited guest to attend a National PTA Legislative Conference.

While I know there are many who are more qualified than I am to serve on a local Boards of Education, I also know that most Boards would be enthusiastic to have someone with my background, resourcefulness and skill set. Nevertheless, since 2003 I have interviewed three times to become a Board of Education candidate (twice with the local Republican Town Committee and once with the Democratic Town Committee). I have also interviewed four more times directly with the Board of Education to fill vacancies. To date, I have interviewed seven times to get on the Board of Education. When I explain this to colleagues and friends the reply is typically "it is too political, why do you keep going at it, give up, focus on your family and business". And my reply to them, exactly! I wont give up because the system simply is not working in the best interest of Connecticut's children, but rather in the interest of the political parties.

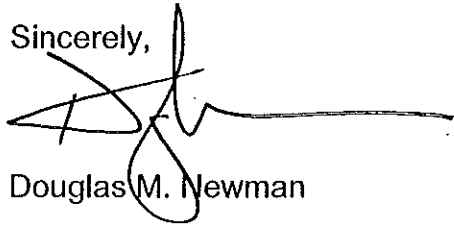
In today's public education world in Connecticut, I believe the single largest impediment to true education reform or progress is in fact the political nature of our local Boards of Education. It is not money, unions, mandates, facilities, teachers, curriculum or the plethora of other factors, it is political decision making by Boards of Education who do not prioritize what is in the best interest of the children.

NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg said this when switching party affiliate two years ago to unaffiliated and I quote "the partisanship of politics and its resulting excuses and inactions has paralyzed decision making."

Thank you for your consideration and I would also like to thank Senator Ed Meyer for challenging the status quo by putting the interest of education Connecticut's children over partisan politics and introducing this Bill.

Please put Connecticut's children first and provide towns the choice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Douglas M. Newman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Douglas M. Newman